

*REPLACED BY  
ART 34 AMDT*

CLAIMS:

1. A method of feeding a suture element, which method includes using fluid pressure to displace the suture element.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, which includes entraining the suture element in a fluid flow stream to displace the suture element in the direction of fluid flow.  
5
3. A method as claimed in Claim 2, which includes disposing the suture element in a fluid flow path; and causing fluid to flow under pressure along the flow path thereby to displace the suture element along the flow path.  
10
4. A method as claimed in Claim 3, in which disposing the suture element in the fluid flow path includes feeding it into an inlet end of the fluid flow path together with the fluid.
5. A method as claimed in Claim 3, in which disposing the suture element in the fluid flow path includes feeding the suture element through a suture element feed path which intersects the fluid flow path at a position intermediate an inlet end and an outlet end thereof.  
15
6. A method as claimed in Claim 5, which includes inhibiting flow of fluid through the suture element feed path in a direction opposite to the direction in which the suture element is to be fed.  
20
7. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which includes forming at least one eye in the suture element along its

*REPLACED BY  
ART 34 AMDT*

length, the eye being configured to receive another suture element therethrough.

8. A suture element feeding device which includes a body defining a fluid flow path and a fluid inlet whereby a fluid under pressure can be fed into the fluid flow path, a suture element inlet whereby a suture element can be fed into the fluid flow path for displacement along the fluid flow path together with the fluid, and an outlet whereby the fluid and suture element can be fed from the device, the fluid flow path connecting the fluid inlet, the suture element inlet and the outlet in flow communication.
10. 9. A device as claimed in Claim 8, which includes fluid displacement means for displacing fluid along the fluid flow path.
10. A device as claimed in Claim 9, which includes actuating means for selectively actuating displacement of the displacement means towards a displaced position in which fluid is displaced along the flow path by the displacement means.
11. A device as claimed in any one of Claims 8 to 10, inclusive, in which the body defines a reservoir, for holding the fluid to be fed into the fluid flow path, the reservoir being connected or connectable in flow communication with the fluid inlet.
20. 12. A medical implement which includes a body defining tissue penetration means for penetrating a tissue to be sutured; a fluid flow path; a fluid inlet whereby a fluid under pressure can be fed into the fluid flow path;

*REPLACED BY  
ART 34 AMDT*

a suture element inlet whereby a suture element can be fed into the fluid flow path for displacement along the fluid flow path together with the fluid; and

an outlet whereby the fluid and suture element can be fed from the body,

the fluid flow path connecting the fluid inlet, the suture element inlet and the outlet in flow communication, and the outlet opening out of the body at a position proximate the tissue penetration means.

13. An implement as claimed in Claim 12, in which the fluid inlet and the suture element inlet are provided by a single inlet into the fluid flow path.

14. An implement as claimed in Claim 13, in which the body defines a reservoir, for holding the fluid to be fed into the fluid flow path, the reservoir being connected or connectable in flow communication with the fluid inlet.

15. An implement as claimed in Claim 12, in which the suture element inlet opens into the fluid flow path at a position intermediate the fluid inlet and the outlet.

16. An implement as claimed in Claim 15, in which the body defines a suture element feed path which intersects the fluid flow path at a position intermediate the fluid inlet and the outlet, the suture element feed path opening into the fluid flow path via the suture element inlet.

17. An implement as claimed in Claim 16, in which the implement includes releasable securing means for selectively releasing and securing a suture element received in the suture element feed path, for feed into the

*REPLACED BY  
ART 34 AMDT*

19

fluid flow path, thereby to permit control of the amount of suture element fed into the fluid flow path.

18. An implement as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 16, inclusive, which includes tissue drive means for driving the tissue onto the  
5 tissue penetrating means.

19. A method of feeding a suture element as claimed in Claim 1, substantially as herein described and illustrated.

20. A suture element feeding device as claimed in Claim 8, substantially as herein described and illustrated.

10 21. A medical implement as claimed in Claim 12, substantially as herein described and illustrated.

22. A new method of feeding a suture element, a new suture element feeding device or a new medical implement, substantially as herein described.